

## swallow the tide(pods)

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# **swallow the tide(pods)**

by [Flustered](#)

## Summary

Tommy has heard all about evil real Mer are! Well, guess what! He's different! He loves his tank, and the fish that swim in it. He is the best, polite, and nicest Mer ever. He isn't like the other Mers. Life is amazing!

That is, until another Mer walks through the door and takes him away.

## Notes

do not actually swallow tidepods, I panicked and didn't know what to call the fic. I will probably change it later.



See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

# Chapter 1

They say that Mer are monsters. Greedy things that only want gold and power. The beasts that dominated the ocean, who rose up from the depths and demanded tribute from the humans on land. “Give them an inch,” a man once said, “they’ll take the goddamned ocean.”

And they did.

And they have.

They said that Mer kept on taking things. There was some kind of war between the humans and the Mer that ended with a tentative truce. The Mer would keep to the oceans, thriving in their communities and the humans would not bother them. There was another war at one point, Tommy was pretty sure he heard something about the Mer attacking once pollution began to seep into their dark waters. And how they ate humans.

Mer were terrifying creatures. But Tommy wasn’t one of them. At least, he didn’t feel like a monster. He liked the beautiful tank, with the school of pretty fish that swam with him. The coral was large and opulent, and Tommy could swim around and around it without getting board. Chasing one of his favorite fish to only catch it with his arms before releasing it.

He wasn’t greedy. He was thankful for the food and the tank Dream gave him. Dream gave him toys to play with and he said thank you every single time. He wasn’t like the Mer in the stories Tommy overheard. He didn’t eat humans. Nope nope! Tommy ate the kelp and the shrimp Dream would hand him.

Tommy even did little tricks! Dream and him played a lot! Dream would stick his fingers in the water and Tommy would swim around them, curling his tail to brush up against Dream’s skin until the man was laughing. And the few times Dream stuck his feet in the tank, Tommy learned that the bottom of his feet were very sensitive to that, leaving Dream breathless as he pulled them out.

But the best time was sing time! Dream would cradle Tommy in one of his large hands, and Tommy would wrap his tail around his wrist to keep himself stable and Tommy would whistle and chirp to a made up song. Sometimes Dream would hum along with him, and Tommy loved it!

Life was *amazing* in the tank. And Tommy was nothing like the big scary Mer that lived out in the cold dark ocean. Tommy’s tank was so warm, and there was so much fun, and once Dream told him that the ocean was like a tank but it didn’t ever end and Tommy didn’t think that was nice at all. How would he turn around once reaching the end of the tank if he didn’t know where it ended?

The ocean sounded horrible. And Tommy would rather just stay in his tank and have fun instead. He even had a bed. A large clam that Dream had ordered special just for Tommy, and it was super soft and nice on the inside.

There had once been others. When Tommy was even smaller than he was now, when he could barely reach the length of Dream's palm, there were other men that appeared. Tommy had been really scared of them. But Dream said they were nice. And they *were*. The one called Sapnap had played with Tommy for hours. Throwing a small toy ring, no bigger than one of their fingers that Sapnap had worn, and Tommy retrieved it and gave it back just for him to throw it back in the tank! George was nice too, he fed Tommy lots of shrimp.

But they left. Dream said they didn't want to play anymore. But Tommy had heard Sapnap arguing with Dream that, "he was going start another damned war with the Mer."

Sapnap and George never came back after that. And Dream gave Tommy a new tank after he put Tommy in his 'travel' tank and drove for a really long time. Tommy was okay with that. He curled up in his clam bed and slept for most of it. But the new tank was much bigger, if a bit empty, and the water didn't taste as nice as before until the filters worked for a bit.

Tommy had been a little sick after that. And Dream had looked so scared as he waded into the hip-deep tank to check on Tommy. It was fine, though. Tommy just slept a bit. And everything was fine when he was adjusted to the new water temperature.

Some time passed since then. And Dream brought in more friends! The fish! Tommy loved chasing the bright and colorful fish around. And it was even better when he put in the coral and plants later on. And when Tommy finally got big enough, Dream gave him a new bed. The clam shell was nice, but over time the outside started to crack. Dream gave Tommy a brown box with a lid that could be locked on the outside *and* inside. It was a bit bigger than the thing that Dream called a 'phone' that he carried with him that made funny lights.

Dream said it was a, "treasure chest." And Tommy *loved* it. He trilled happily as he popped open the lock over and over, playing with the pretty latch. It glinted in the light, and it was by far his most favorite toy. The way that the light caught on the yellow metal made Tommy want to stare at it for the rest of his life.

After Dream took him away from his old tank, nobody else was allowed to visit him. It was okay! Tommy didn't mind at all. He stopped hearing about the scary stories that the ocean Mer did. He would prefer his nice small tank with all the new toys and Dream than a big scary tank that never ended.

But something changed one day when the door opened, and it wasn't Dream who appeared.

There were men that Tommy had never seen before. They came in wearing matching clothes, dark suits and a white collared shirt under it. Tommy was about to chirp a greeting to them when one of them grabbed the drawer in Dream's desk and practically ripped it open. The frightful display of anger made Tommy flee back into his treasure chest.

It wasn't the only thing the men ripped up. They opened all of the doors and pulled out everything inside. Tossing the items on the floor. Even Tommy's toys! They stepped on them and talked to each other, one of them lit up a stick with a flame and began to spew smoke everywhere. Tommy didn't know that humans could breathe fire.

There was a hole in his treasure chest that he could peer out. Where the seal wasn't perfect, and allowed the water to continue to flow through the wooden box. Tommy waited inside, with careful eyes, and watched as the men tore the room apart.

It was clear they didn't find what they were looking for. Tommy did the same thing when he was missing his favorite toy, a diving ring. He dug holes everywhere in the sandy bottom of the tank, and Dream got upset when Tommy made a big mess. But these new strangers didn't look like they were bothered by the mess as they stepped over a spilled bucket of shrimp that Tommy was supposed to eat.

Dream didn't like it when Tommy wasted food. And these men were clearly violating his laws. Dream was going to be so mad when he came back.

Tommy crept out of his chest when it became apparent that the men didn't glance at the fish tank besides a cursory look or two. He made sure to hide his pearlescent tail by using some sand to dull the shine. And he crept behind the coral. Poking only his head out from behind it, and nobody noticed him watching the men. The fish still swam in their schools, not bothered by the destruction outside of the water. It was scary, but it was also super boring. Dream was going to hate the mess these men made.

But it changed when the water felt *electric*.

The fish bolted in the tank. Like a colorful wave, they rushed to the hiding spots in the coral. They could feel it too.

Tommy felt the shift instantly. A sense deep inside of his head rang out with alarm. Danger. *Danger*. For a split second he was tempted to rush back into his chest for safety. But the door was open, and he watched with wide eyes as the *thing* came into the room. He froze. His tail freezing, not even the fins swayed with the water.

That wasn't a human.

It looked like a human. It had two legs. And it was as big as the men around it. It had curly brown hair, and he wore a long trench coat that had holes ripped into it. Fingerless gloves covered its hand. But-

It wasn't a human.

It was *dangerous*.

"So this is where the rat hid?" The *thing* tilted its head to the side, gazing across the wrecked room with a bored look. "Not very impressive, for a traitor that stole money from me. He should've spent it while he had the chance. Did you find anything of use?"

A man straightened up as the *thing* addressed him. "We found some receipts for a cargo shipment, dated three months ago. He might have stashed some items out by the bay. We sent some men to go check it, we should hear back from them shortly."

"Call them now," the thing said, and the man nodded and left the room, pulling out his phone. Leaving Tommy alone with the *danger*.

Tommy should move. But if he moved, then the monster would see him. But he was vulnerable, even as he was pressed up against the coral like it was lifeline, he needed to be safe in his chest. He was scared, because he knew about humans but he didn't know what this thing was.

He wished Dream was here.

The thing surveyed the room, it's eyes didn't linger very long on the tank. Tommy was grateful for that, but it stepped closer instead. "He went through so much effort to hide this place," the thing said to himself, musing as he picked up a paper and then tossed it over his shoulder. The desk had been trashed, but the thing hopped onto the corner of it to sit. "Two months to find this place, and it only has receipts? No, there is something missing."

Tommy couldn't stop staring. What *was* so different about this... thing? He knew instantly that it was different. But from the things appearance alone, it looked like a human. It had the short hair on the head. It even had round golden glasses, and Tommy's eyes could help but linger on them as the light caught them. It had shoes on. So it must have feet. And it wore *pants*, which is a very human thing to do. So-

What made everything inside of Tommy scream that it was a danger?

The thing's eyes landed on the bucket of shrimp. A calculating look appearing, as it turned it's gaze to the fish tank. "What eats shrimp?" It said, and it slid from the desk to come closer to the tank. No *no no*. Don't get closer!

Tommy tensed up even more. Frozen. His little hands clutching at the coral tightly. It had yellow eyes, Tommy faintly noticed as the creature leaned in to peer into the water. The school of fish broke their cover in fright as the danger got closer. And they swirled around like a tornado until they found a new hiding spot.

"Not those," the thing's gaze fell away from the bright and colorful fish dismissively. "What else-"

The thing's eyes met Tommy's. The water was stolen from Tommy's lungs as he felt the weight of the danger's attention on him. Is this- is this the part where Tommy makes a dash for his chest? Should he move? Or maybe he should stay very still and the thing couldn't see him.

The thing dropped to it's knees, mouth dropping open as it pressed up against the glass. It fumbled with it's glasses, sliding them up it's nose as it leaned closer. "Oh," a soft noise leaving it's mouth. The pads of it's fingers were pressing hard against the glass.

Should- Tommy should run? Right? But the thing wasn't attacking him? It *saw* Tommy but it wasn't getting him? Weren't dangerous things... dangerous? Tommy cautiously decided to test the waters and his hands hurt as he released the coral. He moved an extra inch behind the

coral, to hide himself better, but the thing pressed even closer to the glass. It's breath fogging up the tank.

"No, no, no, no," the thing said quickly, "shh, it's okay. Hi, little one." It laughed giddily to itself, "oh you are so small. Look at you, you're a little guppy aren't you?" It crooned, and a maniac look appeared in its eyes, "oh, I could just *eat you up*."

That was a threat! A threat!! Tommy squeaked and finally ducked behind the coral all the way. Grabbing handfuls of sand and pouring them over his tail in an attempt to hide. The chest was too far! The thing was going to *eat him*.

There was a curse, and Tommy could hear the thing fumble with the lid of the tank. It was hidden where it met the top of the wall. And Dream had said it was tricky to pull it apart. It gave Tommy enough time to squirm under the sand and hope he did a good enough job. It was a bit harder to breathe under the layer of sand, but Tommy could do it.

"Where did you go lil fella?" The thing said, *above* Tommy. It was looking into the water now. "Come here, I won't hurt you. I'm sorry for scaring you, guppy. I just want to see your magnificent tail," the frustration in the voice ebbed away and became sickeningly sweet, "I have never seen such a beautiful scales, and I just want a closer look. You're the prettiest Mer I've ever seen."

Yeah right! Tommy wasn't stupid. The thing was going to lure him out of his hiding spot!

Even though his scales were really stunning. That part was true.

There was a frustrated sigh, "come on, just let me have a look? Please?"

Not even 'please' would work in this scenario. Tommy was the smartest, best, kindest, Mer ever.

There was a splash above Tommy. And the water churned suddenly, and Tommy knew what this sensation felt like. Something big was coming *in*. He had to stop himself from the fearful churr that almost escaped. His tank!! It's been invaded! The fish were swirling around again, flitting to the corners and then doubling back around.

"Come on, baby." The words were... bubbly. But still audible. There was a soft noise. It echoed in the water, bouncing off the walls, and Tommy-

It stole the water from his gills. A deep purr echoed and resonated around him. And he couldn't stop the flinch and shiver that ran down his back. It made his heart stop.

"There you are, sweetling." A large gloved hand dug into the sand around Tommy, grabbing him and pulling him up. All he could see was the floor beneath him as he was lifted up, unable to turn around. "Oh, you got all dirty. Look at your poor scales," the thing crooned that noise again and Tommy let out a distressed chirp.

The hand spasmed around him. And Tommy clutched at the fingers holding him, taking in frantic breaths as his heart thundered in his chest. The grip was firm, but not too tight.

Carefully avoiding from blocking Tommy's gills, and Tommy thrashed in the hold, letting out a pitiful pleading trill.

"I know, this must be so scary. I'm sorry, guppy. But look at you! You're so small. An absolute darling." The words echoed around Tommy, and he felt the fingers poking at him. Tommy tried to push at them, finally able to get enough space to turn around to look up at the thing holding him.

The first thing Tommy saw was the scales. The thing was smiling down at him, it's sharp teeth (just like Tommy) showing. Lining it's human cheekbones was a spattering of light blue scales (just like Tommy), and they glittered in the light. It's eyes had shifted as well, the pupils more like slits than circles (*just like Tommy*).

"Hello," crooned the Mer.

Tommy tilted his head back and *screamed*.

The tight grip around him opened up in surprise. And Tommy could feel the panic and terror giving him extra speed as he fled. There was only one place that was safe enough to shield him from a real Mer. And Tommy didn't hesitate as he rammed himself into his chest, immediately reaching up and fumbling at the latch to pull the top down. The lock clicked as Tommy slammed it shut. There was also a little latch that he folded down and it fit into a metal ring.

Double locked.

The Mer couldn't get him now. But that didn't stop the panic from bubbling up in Tommy. He clutched at his arms, shaking as he wrapped himself up with his tail. There was a real life Mer here. *In his tank*. Tommy's nice and wonderful tank! It's been invaded! The Mer probably *ate* people and now it was going to eat Tommy up like a snack!

"That is adorable," the words were the only warning before the chest, with Tommy in it, was jostled. The water moved, and Tommy let out another destressed chirp as he realized the Mer picked it up. "Your nest is in a treasure chest. Techno is going to fucking die when he sees this."

The lock jolted. And Tommy trilled in fear, holding himself in a tight little ball. "Oh, I see. You can keep it closed. Don't worry, little one. I won't stress you out any more than I have to, okay? You can stay in your nest all you want. But for now, I am going to take advantage of how convenient this is."

The water shifted more and more. Tommy didn't know what was happening. And he didn't want to look through the hole just in case the Mer was going to catch him. He heard water splashing, and suddenly the water in the chest was beginning to drain as it was lifted out of the water. The holes in the wood were not sealed to keep it in, save for a little puddle at the bottom.

Tommy screeched again, his voice echoing in the air instead of the water, holding his hands out as the chest was jostled side to side to prevent himself from being thrown back and forth.

“Shhh, it’s okay.” The voice of the Mer wasn’t bubbly anymore, and Tommy let out another screech. “Look, I found a bowl. I’ll get you some water. It’ll be too dangerous for you to travel with me without any.”

Tommy could stay out of the water. He could breathe air if he wanted. But his skin dried out, and the puddle at the bottom wasn’t enough to keep his scales wet. He let out a pleading trill, and there was that funny noise again. The soft purr. Except it didn’t echo as much in the air. But it still made Tommy pause. Long enough for the chest to be dropped back into water again.

Water poured back into his nest, and Tommy curled back up into a ball. The liquid was moving back and forth chopily. And it reminded Tommy of when Dream took him to the new tank. Tommy hated traveling. The water wasn’t still and fresh, instead it got stifling and it jostled him around. He let out another distressed noise. Where was the Mer taking him?

“Shhh,” the Mer said, “it’s going to be fine, little one. I’m bringing you back to where you finally belong. With *us*. ”

## Chapter 2

Tommy stopped making noises. Everytime he let out a little cry, the Mer made that noise again. And Tommy didn't like it. It made his ears itch. There was nothing he could do but wait. He was, at the very least, safe in his treasure chest. The Mer couldn't get him.

He curled up in a ball, tucking his tail around and hugging it. The water trembled and brushed over his scales choppily as the bowl was moved around. Once, Tommy moved to the hole and peered through it, just to see what was happening. All he saw was a large hand splayed out, holding the bowl.

This was Dream's desk bowl. Sometimes he let Tommy sit on his desk in it. And Tommy would watch him do boring paper work. Tommy let out a low worried churr, and the large hand shifted and the Mer crooned. "It's fine, little one. I know, it's scary. But you'll be okay."

Until the Mer got hungry and wanted a snack, no doubt. Tommy curled back into a ball. The water was getting colder, now that there wasn't a source of warmth. A car roared to life, and the water sloshed around. Already the water was getting stale. Becoming almost stifling.

Tommy hated traveling.

Seconds felt like hours. Hours were weeks. Tommy fell asleep at one point, curled up in a ball. Only to be awoken some time later when the water felt horrible to breathe and the Mer humming a tune.

For a second, before Tommy was really awake, he thought Dream was back and the whole thing was a nightmare. Dream wanted to have sing time with Tommy. But no, Tommy's treasure chest was being stolen away, with him inside of it.

At one point the car stopped. The water lurching again. But then it continued, and stopped again, and then sped up once more and-

It made the stale water slosh back and forth, and Tommy felt sick. He couldn't stop the whine that fell from his lips. The Mer stopped humming. "Slow down. And stop breaking too hard," the words were cold and sharp. And Tommy shivered from the harsh tone. But after that, the jerky motions stopped. And the Mer began to sing again.

The song wasn't bad. And it lulled Tommy to sleep again. He was out for what must've been *forever*, because what Tommy woke up was the bowl being set down on something. The jolt startled Tommy, and he let out a surprised chirp.

"There you are, little buddy. I was worried about you, I hadn't heard you say anything in a minute." The Mer said next to Tommy. "Did you take a nap?"

The sound of the car was gone. And in it's place, Tommy heard running water. He uncurled himself from the tight ball and floated over to the hole to peer out of it. And he sees *blue*. He

was in a new tank? But as he looked closer, he was still in Dream's desk bowl. But he was also in a new tank? Why? He made a small confused noise.

"Don't worry, you just need to wait a bit longer in there, kiddo. I need the water to adjust temperatures before letting you out. Okay?" Tommy heard water splashing, but he didn't see the Mer. Not from the angle the hole was at.

The Mer was going to put him in a new tank? What was wrong with Tommy's old one? Was the Mer going to hunt Tommy down before eating him? Panic bubbled up, but Tommy repressed the fearful noises that he wanted to make. The Mer would come back. And that was the last thing Tommy wanted.

Something shifted in the background. The click of a wooden door opening and shutting. Items being dragged around. But Tommy couldn't *see*. And somehow knowing that the Mer could be anywhere was a whole lot scarier than knowing it was nearby.

"Where the hell did he put them?" The Mer muttered angrily, but nobody responded to the question. "Oh, I'm Philza Minecraft and I always put things away in obscure spots, fucking asshole." That sounded the opposite. Tommy had a sneaking suspicion that the Mer was not this 'Philza' person.

Mer's really were evil. Dream would call that identity theft.

Tommy's curiosity got the better of him when he heard the faint noise of a phone ringing. It was boring and he was tired of staring at nothing. He pulled back the latch. Pausing just in case the Mer heard him. But Tommy didn't hear anything, so he figured he was being too sneaky for the Mer to catch him.

"Heya mate," a scratchy voice came out of a speaker.

"Dad," the Mer said frustratedly, "where the hell did you put the extra filters?"

"The filters, Wil? Mate, I just changed them out a week ago. They don't need to be replaced."

"Not the regular ones, the extra fine ones that filter everything from when Techno got sick. I *need* them."

Tommy clicked open the lock on the chest. And carefully, super duper slowly, Tommy opened it just a crack. Tommy had a lot of practice doing this when he wanted to hunt down one of his fish. They almost never noticed the small box opening until Tommy was flashing out, chasing after one of the brightly colored fish.

There were no fish here. If anything, Tommy was the one who was hunted. He peered out. The bowl was sitting on a step that lead further down into the bright blue clear water. He could see the distant shadow of rocks and coral, but those were far away.

This tank was *huge*.

"What do you need those for? Are you sick Wilbur?" The voice on the phone said.

The Mer-Wilbur? - spluttered, "no, I'm fine Dad. I don't need to go into the den. Perfectly healthy. Anyways, where are they?"

There was a hum over the phone, "could you breath all the way in for me, mate?"

"Dad," Wilbur groaned, "seriously? Fine." And he made an exaggerated breath in and out. "See? I'm cool."

"If you say so," the man said over the phone, but he didn't sound convinced. "I put them under the sink next to the sponges."

Wilbur spluttered, "why would you put them there? They should be with the filters."

"I don't know, why do you need them? You know the filter only works in one section of the pool."

"Speaking of," Wilbur said, "how to you block off the tunnels to the other swimming areas again?"

"Wil," the voice said flatly, "what are you doing?"

"Nothing!" Wilbur fidgeting nervously, and Tommy didn't know a Mer that could be *that big* could be nervous.

Actually, Tommy didn't know that Mer's could be as big as humans. They were *giants*. Could he get that big one day? Dream once measured Tommy with a ruler and said that Tommy was ten whole inches. How many inches was the big Mer?

Although it made a lot more sense now, seeing a big Mer. Tommy wasn't sure how somebody as small as him could wage a war against humans.

Well! It's a great thing Tommy wasn't like the other Mer! Because he wasn't an evil one! He was a good one who said thank you and was very polite. He rose out of the treasure chest, giving his tail a moment to stretch out. It felt nice. Wilbur's back was still turned to him, and he wasn't watching Tommy.

"Right."

"I just... thought it would be nice to swim in something fresh. That's all. Super clean." Wilbur pulled out a box that had a bright colorful text on it, '*ultra fine filter for sensitive fish.*'

"Mate, you don't need the expensive filters for that. We keep the pool clean enough."

Tommy rose up to the top of the bowl. The air was more refreshing than the water, and Tommy hated how stifling it was in there. He needed bubbles. That made the water stay nice, and not yucky. His hands reached up to the top of the glass bowl, and he pulled himself up. Staring at Wilbur.

"Yeah, but I wanted it extra, extra clean."

"Wil, what *are* you doing. Seriously, mate. Are you sure you're not sick and you're trying to get out of it? I can leave my meetings and come back, the men won't mind me having to go early. Or I can at least send Techno back home to check on you. Wait, did you find anything about Dream?"

"Oh, yeah. He wasn't there." Wilbur brushed the question to the side as he stood up, box under his arm, "he bailed."

"Fuck."

"Hmm, anyways, how do I seal off the tunnels again?"

Tommy quietly heaved himself out of the water. His tail curling up as he rested it against the rim of the bowl. The edge of the glass was thin, and it was uncomfortable. But if Tommy could slip into the water, he could get away before Wilbur would notice. And Tommy is super duper fast in the water! He could swim from one side of his tank to the other in two seconds flat! His hand dipped into the clear blue water, and *oh-*

It was *warm*. Tommy had somehow gotten used to how cold it was in the bowl. He shivered, leaning forwards to dip his arms in the warm water.

"There are some glass panes that will fit in the tunnels. They should just fit in and they have latch. They're in the second closet with the towels."

"Why are they with the- you know what. I'm not going to ask any more questions."

"Okay, I'm sending Techno home."

"What? No! You don't need to do that," Wilbur was turning. Tommy caught the motion in the corner of his eye. He flinched, getting off balanced, "I'm perfectly fine, so you don't- *THE BABY!*" Wilbur shrieked high, the phone falling to the ground.

Tommy fell into the water with a small *bloop* of water. The warmth was around him. But he wasted no time! He was the fastest Mer ever! Tommy's tail caught the water, and pushed him forward.

Behind him he heard clothes being ripped and there was a deep, horrible, crash as something big landed in the water. Tommy couldn't stop the fearful chirp that escaped him, and his plan quickly changed. From getting away as far as he could, to hiding as fast as possible. He made it to the coral, but there wasn't any nooks that Tommy could crawl into. He darted back and forth, knowing his time was almost up as he heard the croon behind him.

There was a hole in the sand. And Tommy banked a sharp turn and dove for it. Squirming into the hole and curling up into a tight ball.

His gills stuttered in the warm water. They were cold, too cold to flex back and forth to breathe as fast as Tommy needed them to. A shadow fell over the hole, and Tommy crammed a hand into his mouth to stop himself from crying in fear.

“Baby!” Wilbur crooned, the water quietly churning as something large swam by. “Pspsp, come here! Please! It’s too dangerous to swim in here right now, you aren’t used to the water yet.” The noise made Tommy’s ears itch.

The shadow left. And Tommy’s heart was pounding like a drum. Despite his fear, Tommy poked his head out of the hole. He needed to *see*. The suspense was going to kill him.

Wilbur was...

*Blue*. A long lith tail, the length of it bigger than a *car*, swirled around hypnotically. His scales were glittering in the light, and Tommy wanted to touch them for a moment. Wilbur’s human clothes were gone, and the scales went up his stomach and down his arms as he frantically swam around the coral. Scouring it for any sign of Tommy.

Wilbur crooned again, and somehow this time it translated in Tommy’s head. *Safe-safe-come-here*. The itch in Tommy’s ears made the noise uncomfortable, but for a split second Tommy *wanted* to go up to the giant man-eating Mer. Instead he ducked back into the hole with a swish of his own tail.

“Please come out. You’ll get sick.” Wilbur made a sound that Tommy hadn’t heard from anybody else besides him. A sad warble that turned into a frustrated hiss, “fuck, I didn’t seal off the tunnels.” And the water was agitated, and a layer of sand was thrown into the hole. When Tommy peered back up, Wilbur was gone.

The Mer *wasn’t here anymore*.

Tommy... was safe?

He could hear the noise of Wilbur echoing through the water faintly. He wasn’t going to be safe for very long though. Tommy cautiously rose further up, his gills working as fast as they could. They were starting to cramp up with the effort.

Tommy needed to find a safe spot. He eyed the coral, but Wilbur had looked there first. Tommy knew the sandy hole wasn’t going to keep safe for very long. There were some rocks on the bottom, and he eyed those before dismissing the thought.

He wanted his treasure chest. But that wasn’t safe in the bowl. And Tommy was too small to drag it anywhere. He rose up further, trying to find a good advantage point. But all he could see was the stone walls of the tank, the coral, the stones, the tunnels-

The tunnels?

Tommy cautiously darted up to one of the large circles in the wall. There wasn’t a wall there, only free flowing water. As Tommy got closer, he could hear the noises Wilbur was making getting louder, and he backed away. The water stretched out in the tunnels until Tommy couldn’t see it anymore.

Was... this the ocean?

Tommy didn't like it. He backed away, glancing over at the coral again. Maybe it would be good-

A dark spot caught Tommy's eye. In the stone wall, there was a large crack. Pieces of the stone missing, and there was a Tommy sized hole. Tommy darted towards it, and peered inside the crevice. There was a small little nook, not very big. But Tommy could fit in it!

A hiding spot!! A good one too!! Tommy squirmed inside of it. Curling up in a ball in the small space. His tail fins falling over Tommy's eyes as he hugged his tail. Oh yes, the Mer couldn't find him here. He wasn't going to be eaten!

Tommy let out a quiet trill, and then coughed when his gills contracted.

He- he needed to lay down. This hadn't been the first time this happened to him. Tommy could feel his empty stomach churning, and although he was unhappy and hungry, it was a small blessing. He hated throwing up and having to swim in the bile until Dream cleaned the water.

Now that the danger had finally passed, Tommy sagged against the stone. Resting his head on the cold rock. His gills hurt. And breathing hurt too. He was... just going to rest his eyes. Sleeping always made him feel better when he woke up. It was like, the secret of life or something. Sleeping always makes the pain go away.

Tommy blinked a few times, staring out the small hole and into the great big blue waters beyond. And he closed his eyes, shivering quietly.

## Chapter 3

Noises woke him up. Was Dream back yet? Tommy shifted around, but he didn't open his eyes. Content to languish in his chest until Dream splashed the water- a sign to come up. Tommy wanted to sleep a bit more. There was an uncomfortable ache in his stomach, and if he drifted back to sleep then he wouldn't feel it anymore.

And then there was an earth shattering loud noise. Tommy jolted awake, his tail unfurling, and he slammed his head on rock. Rock? Where was he? Why wasn't he sleeping in his chest? The wood was softer-

Oh.

*Oh no.*

The memories of the previous day came back to Tommy. And he froze, holding his head in his hands. He was in a new, big, tank. Possibly the ocean. With the biggest Mer Tommy had ever seen. (The only other Mer Tommy has seen.)

“-I’m not joking!” Wilbur- yes that was the Mer- hissed in annoyance.

“*Right.*” A new deep voice replied. And Tommy felt a new flash of fear crawl down his back.

Cautiously, Tommy pushed his hands against the wall and peered out the hole. And he clapped his palms over his mouth to stop the fearful trill that threatened to come out. There wasn't just *one* Mer.

There were *two*.

And the second one was *bigger than Wilbur*.

How big do these ocean Mer get?? They just get bigger and bigger! No wonder they eat humans! They can just swallow one up without chewing it.

The second Mer's scales were a dazzling pink, matching the long flowing hair that curled out his face like a halo. The tip of his tail started out as a dark, almost black red, and as it rose up his tail and chest it became a pearly pink. His tail stretching out, far longer than Wilbur's blue one. And just the sight of the sharp teeth in the new Mer's mouth made Tommy duck back into his hole.

The two Mer didn't notice him. And Tommy wanted to curl up and never venture out of the hole again. Not when those to *giants* were out and about.

“He’s hiding around here somewhere.” Wilbur hissed, “I just can’t find him.”

"I'm not saying I don't believe you, Wil. But... I don't believe you, Wilbur." The second Mer's voice was deep and rumbley. It made the water tremble. "Dream had a baby mer in a tank? The fucking rat got his hands on a child? Did you eat my blue ring octopus again? You know that it can cause hallucinations. I'm more worried that you let a random diseased fish in our pool."

"I didn't." Wilbur let out a growl, and Tommy pressed himself as close as he could to the far wall. That noise made his heart leap up and his ears were itching again. "There is a baby Mer, Technoblade."

"Well, I haven't seen one. And it's been a few hours. I've looked with you, Wilbur. I think you're just blowing bubbles. You made Phil panic and send me home and you're just making stuff up at this point. I had important things I had to do today. You're lucky I managed to convince him to stay."

"Shut up! I'm not crazy. He's around here, somewhere." Wilbur paused, and then crooned *safe-come-safe* and Tommy-

He pulled away from the wall. His head almost poking out of the hole before Tommy realized what he was *doing*? What! No!! Tommy threw himself back into the shadows. What kind of magic was Wilbur doing?? He was... cheating!! A big cheater! A bully!

"You're going to go hoarse if you keep that up," the big pink Mer, Technoblade, said. "Wilbur. You're being... what's the right word." He trailed off, "crazy. That's it. You're losing it."

"I am *not*." Wilbur spat out.

"You need to go to bed. Take a rest or something."

"No! There is a guppy-"

"Stop." Techno snapped, and Tommy flinched at the sound. "No more of this. Even if there is a kid here, you need to rest. You clearly haven't gotten enough sleep. If, and this is a big 'if', Wilbur, there is a kid here, I will take care of him."

Tommy couldn't stop himself. His curiosity was getting the better of him. Trembling, he peered out of the crack again. Wilbur was hunched, his fins opened up wide, and Tommy heard the beginning of a *death rattle*.

"He is *mine*." Wilbur hissed, his yellow eyes in thin slits. "He's my baby. You can't *touch him*." The claws at the tips of his fingers were extended, poised to fight.

He was... protecting Tommy? From the bigger Mer?

The big pink Mer was faster. A big hand, so much bigger than Tommy himself, flashed out. Quicker than Tommy could see it move! And it wrapped around Wilbur's throat, covering his sensitive gills.

The thunderous growl made the water hum and boil with the noise. And Tommy instinctively flattened himself, frozen and unable to move. “Do not challenge me, Wil.” Technoblade’s gills flared up high, and Wilbur’s hands clutched at Techno’s wrist. “You know you won’t win against me.”

Wilbur croaked, his tail thrashing behind him. And then he went limp. The growl turned sweeter, almost purring. And Technoblade pulled Wilbur into his arms, holding the drooping Mer in his arms. “There you go. Just needed a reminder, huh? We’ve been so busy, running in circles to notice. You’ve been too stressed out without us.”

“I’m not stressed,” Wilbur muttered, completely lax in Technoblade’s grip. “I’m telling the truth.”

“Provide evidence, Wilbur. And I’ll believe you. If you had taken a picture I would be tearing the pool apart with you, but chances are, I think you’ve had my octopus.”

“I don’t need your LSD inducing fish.”

“Cephalopod.”

“Whatever,” Wilbur pushed away from Technoblade, floating listlessly to the side before flicking his tail to right himself.

“I have calls I need to make. Take a nap, Wilbur. And we can revisit this another time.” Technoblade said, “when Phil is home we’ll talk about it.”

“Fine.” Wilbur snarled, but without any heat. His fins staying down. He wasn’t looking at Technoblade in the eye anymore.

“If I see you still swimming around in the next fifteen minutes, I’m going to drag you down to the nest. And only Phil can get you out. And he’s on a business trip for the next two days, Wilbur.”

“I know that!” Wilbur grumbled, and Technoblade blew out a huff of bubbles before turning on his tail. Heading towards the stairs. Tommy lost sight of him as the long pink tail flicked out of view.

The water splashed as the Mer left. And after a few seconds, Wilbur straightened up from his hunched position. “Asshole.” Wilbur hissed, “if Phil was here he’d believe me. But no, Techno has to be practical. Damn him.” He floated over to the coral. Tommy noted that a lot of the plants that had once been thriving had been torn off. What a waste.

“Baby, please. Come out.” Wilbur warbled, his voice breaking, and he circled over the coral. “I have food, aren’t you hungry?” He opened a fist, and inside was a *whole* shrimp.

Not just the meat, that Dream fed Tommy. But an entire shrimp, with the legs and head still attached. Tommy’s mouth instantly began to water. Dream said it was a mistake to give Tommy a whole shrimp. Because it made a mess. The shell and bones left over sat at the

bottom of the tank until Dream had to clean it. After that, he only bought the kind of shrimp that had only the meat, no shell or anything.

The one thing Tommy loved more than shrimp, were shrimp *eyes*. They popped in his mouth. And they were so *tasty*. And the shell! Oh the shell was so crunchy! Tommy could only take a few bites of it. But it was delicious.

Tommy licked his lips, tasting the salt in the water. Wilbur... he didn't hurt Tommy. Even when he had caught Tommy in his tank, he had been careful not to squeeze too hard. Which was a hard thing to do, Dream sometimes accidentally held Tommy too tightly.

And!! And Wilbur protected Tommy! Against the big Mer!! The idea of a *protector* sank and curled around Tommy's heart, and he found himself having to stop himself from chirping with glee at the idea. The word *protector* was foreign, but instinctually Tommy was drawn to it. He needed one. Especially with all of the big Mer that could eat him!

Wilbur stood up to Technoblade, knowing that the big Mer could eat him, for *Tommy*.

That means he must be a *good Mer*. Like Tommy is! Not an evil ocean one! Right? And he had *food*.

Not all Mer's were evil. Tommy was proof of that. And he had a hunch that maybe Wilbur wasn't evil either. That was great!

Tommy could have... a *protector*. The thought nearly made him purr with satisfaction.

But that didn't mean that it wasn't scary. Tommy watched as Wilbur circled the coral a few times. The wilting plants on the ground being brushed aside with the force of his tail. If Wilbur knew where Tommy was then his hiding spot was no longer a good one. And it was scary to swim in such a huge tank.

After a few seconds, Wilbur blew out a stream of bubbles with a sigh and turned towards one of the tunnels. And Tommy sat up with alarm. No! Tommy hadn't built up enough courage. And Wilbur was going to leave and then the other Mer could get Tommy and eat him! No!

Tommy leaned out of the hole and let out a squeaky trill. His gills were incredibly sore. And the noise was far more feeble than Tommy had planned it to be.

Wilbur froze. Just the tip of his blue tail still within view.

And Tommy realized what a horrible mistake he had just made. He pressed himself back inside the hole just as Wilbur whirled around, his yellow eyes in slits. "Baby?" He croons, *safe-safe-come* again. And Tommy hovered uncertainty at the sound. "Hey little guy, where are you?" He slinks back into the tank, his long tail flicking out. And he circled the room with a single beat.

"Hmmm? I heard you somewhere in here. Are you interested in the food? Is that it?" He holds up the shrimp, and he circles the room once more. Tommy's eyes tracked the crustation

in the Mer's hand. "Come on, guppy, can you make another sound for me?" And he croons, his eyes darting back and forth across the tank.

He makes one more circle around the tank. And Tommy finally gathered up enough courage to make another chirp.

Wilbur hones in on the sound. His tail fin twitches and he glides smoothly through the water towards Tommy. His eyes still bouncing up and down, looking but he hadn't see the nook that Tommy was cowering in.

Was this really the right idea? Tommy didn't know. But he wanted that shrimp. And every time he thought the word 'protector' he felt a wave of excitement in his stomach. He wanted one. A nice big protector that would keep Tommy safe from the scary ocean Mer.

"Where are you," Wilbur sang, and his fins slid against the wall as he came closer. "Little one? You hide so well! I can't seem to find you." And he croons, *safe-safe-come-here*, just inches away from Tommy.

Tommy felt something twitch inside of him. And his voice is breathy and strange as he mimics the noise. *Safe-safe?*

"Yesss," Wilbur hisses quietly, his eyes locking onto Tommy's hiding spot. His pupils expand from the thin vertical slits. "Hello, guppy." He croons, leaning closer so he was inches away from the hole. *Safe-safe-come-here*.

Tommy hesitantly moved closer. Uncurling himself from the tight ball and leaving the shadow, just a little. He wasn't sure if Wilbur was going to be his protector. Wilbur's eyes got big when they saw him appear. And Tommy flinched back.

"Shh, no, no. It's okay," Wilbur softly said, "I won't hurt you." Lurching forwards, as if he could press closer to the wall. He sinks downwards, keeping himself eye level with the nook.

That is a very promising sign for a protector. One might even say that is the number one rule of a protector. Not hurting Tommy is incredibly important.

But would Wilbur protect him against the other big Mer? Tommy gave a cautious churr.

"Would you like some food?" Wilbur shifts, bringing up one webbed hand and opened it, revealing the shrimp. Tommy's eyes locked on it. "Come here, I won't hurt you. I bet you're very hungry, aren't you bud? I won't even move, okay? I promise."

*He promised.* The oath that can never be broken! Tommy knew all about promises. They were very important. If Wilbur promised that means he can never go against his word. Tommy eyed up the shrimp, and, throwing most of the caution to the current, slowly exited the nook. Unspooling his tail and stretching out.

Wilbur's eyes tracked every movement. But he didn't move, keeping his hand flat as Tommy slowly moved towards the food. The smell of the shrimp made Tommy's mouth water, and he darted quickly forward to grab the shelled snack. He froze. Then glanced up at Wilbur.

“I’m not moving, guppy.” Wilbur smiled, and it was true. He was keeping very still. Tommy slowly turned towards the shrimp in his arms, and he was *starving*. Dream hadn’t visited in a while, and Tommy could last without much food. If Tommy got very hungry he could eat one of his fish. But with the stress of having to move to a new tank, and being hunted down by giant ocean Mer, made Tommy’s stomach grumble. He slowly sank to rest his weight on Wilbur’s palm, ripping into the shrimp with gusto.

With one bite, Tommy tore off one of the eyes. And he trilled with glee at the taste. This one was fresh! His claws sank into the soft parts of the shell, as his jaws crunched down onto the hard husk and *bit*. With a solid crack, the chitin broke apart, revealing the soft tasty muscle underneath. Tommy dug his fingers in and scooped it into this mouth greedily, hardly swallowing in the effort to eat it all in one go.

All too soon, Tommy was scooping out the last remaining bits of meat, his stomach heavy with food. The chitin had been picked clean, the eyes savored, and the shrimp was completely devoured. Tommy laid down on the warm palm, his eyes finally traveling up to meet Wilbur’s.

A sudden burst of unknown knowledge hit him. Wilbur protected him. Fed him. Kept his *promise*. And it swelled up like a balloon inside of Tommy. His head was buzzing. His stomach is full. Tommy could just fall over right now and not care about anything. Everything was perfect. His gills flared up as he took in a breath and Tommy croons *caretaker?*

Wilbur’s eyes expand even more. And he echoed back *yes-caretaker-safe*. And Tommy felt that electric sensation of glee rise up. He gives out a happy whistle darting up to curl around Wilbur’s neck. His fins brushing against Wil’s gills, as Tommy presses himself tightly to Wilbur’s cheek.

Not only did Tommy find a protector, he got something entirely better! A *caretaker!*

What is a caretaker? Tommy didn’t know. But it has to be something good because something told him it was a very very nice thing to have!

“Baby,” Wilbur breathed, cupping Tommy in his hand, “a little guppy. Mine. My little one.” And he croons so sweetly that Tommy joins him. His little voice pipping up and trying to mimic the noise. Tommy coughs after a few seconds, his gills still hurting.

“Oh, you are so cute.” Wilbur hums, and Tommy tried to hum with him but he coughed again. Wilbur gently pulled Tommy away to peer down at him, “and so skinny too. I should get you all of the food. Every single bit of it. I’ll get you every single fish in the ocean, guppy.”

Every fish? Tommy could have so many friends to swim with! Tommy wiggled happily wrapping his arms around Wilbur’s finger. And then two scary things happened at once.

There was a crashing noise as something hit the water from above. Wilbur curled around Tommy instantly, wrapping them both up with his long tail. Hiding Tommy with a coil of blue scales. A death rattle clicked right next to Tommy’s ears, and he froze in fear.

“Wilbur,” the big Mer was *back*. *And he was angry.* “I told you to go rest, a half an hour ago.” Technoblade hissed out.

Wilbur snarled, holding Tommy close to his chest. His fins open and lifted high in anger. And slowly, the death rattle got louder.

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Summary

A distraction for those who need it.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Why are you acting like this,” Technoblade growled, and the water shook at the noise. Tommy pressed himself closer to Wilbur’s chest, his caretakers hand cupping him closely. The sound scared him. And his hands clung to Wilbur’s blue scales.

“Leave,” Wilbur hissed, his fins raised as high as they can. Making him look as scary and mean as possible. “Leave me alone.”

A second death rattle began to click out. Deeper, and louder than Wilbur’s. And Tommy shivered, all of his instincts pushing at him to find someplace small and dark to hide. Wilbur pressed him closer to his chest. His tail wrapped around the both of them like a snake.

“Wilbur,” Technoblade hissed, and the final noise made Tommy break into tears. He pressed his face against Wilbur’s scales and keened. He was scared. So incredibly scared. Wilbur has to save him. Please.

The death rattles stopped. And Wilbur’s fingers trailed up and down Tommy’s spine, and Tommy let out another whine. “You’re not hurt, are you?” Wilbur whispered, blowing bubbles across Tommy’s back.

“Wilbur,” Technoblade’s voice grew hushed and soft, “what was that?”

“Get back,” Wilbur snapped out, both of his hands coming up and cradling Tommy carefully. Keeping him hidden.

“Wilbur,” Techno’s voice goes sing-songy and Wilbur shudders under Tommy. “What do you have? Show me. I won’t do anything.” Techno says so sweetly, and his voice was getting closer.

“Stay- get back.” Wilbur’s fins were slowly falling down, and Technoblade hummed again, *safe-show-me*. “I’m not joking.”

“I know you aren’t.” Technoblade crooned, and Wilbur back hit the wall. “You should show me what you have there, Wil. Let me see.” He was so close now.

Wilbur's hands twitched. And Tommy felt them hesitate before starting to pull away. No! He can't show Technoblade Tommy! That was against the rules. He had to protect him from the big ocean Mer. Tommy snapped an arm out and grabbed on of his fingers and pulled it back, crying out *caretaker-protector*.

Wilbur twitched, and the other hand that wasn't cupping Tommy lashed out. A death rattle screeched, and Tommy could taste blood in the water.

Light hit Tommy's eyes. Wilbur's fingers parted in surprise. And Tommy looked up with frozen horror. Wilbur's hand was still stretched out, his black claws extended. The big pink Mer only a foot away, his own hand cupping his bloody cheek where three gashes gently stole the red blood into the current.

Technoblade looked just as surprised as Wilbur was. And then his heavy brows fell, and a cool expression appeared. His red eyes flicked over to Wilbur, narrowing. And slowly, his lips peeled back to reveal sharp teeth. A growl made the water hum and shake with energy.

And then his eyes landed on Tommy's curled form in Wilbur's hand. And his pupils went big and dark.

Instinctually, Tommy fearfully barked out *flee!*

Wilbur didn't hesitate. The world blurred almost instantly as he turned tail and fled down one of the long tunnels. Tommy had thought he had been the fastest Mer ever! But Tommy was pressed against Wilbur's chest by the current of the water as it wooshed past. Wilbur was incredible!

Behind them, Tommy heard a low croon. *Come-here-pod*. And then, shortly after that, a long frustrated snarl. Following them.

*Chasing them.*

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Tommy peered out from behind Wilbur's hand, the strength of the water pushing at him. There were lights spaced out on the wall, and they flashed past as Wilbur swam faster than *fast!* But Wilbur notice Tommy peeking out from between his fingers and he closed them, leaving Tommy cocooned in his palm. The water swirled around them.

Tommy couldn't see though! But it felt really nice to be held. He kept an arm around Wilbur's thumb. Over the rush of the water, he could hear Wilbur's heart pounding rapidly. Wilbur was surely the fastest Mer ever, clearly the best caretaker in the world. Nothing could ever beat him!

Wilbur jerked and changed directions. And behind them came a low *come-here!* But Wilbur ignored it this time! Tommy was suddenly pressed against Wilbur's thumb as he turned again, and he let out a squeak of surprise.

Caretaker made a low churring noise, and Tommy relaxed. Everything was okay! It was good.

“Wilbur!” The voice shouted behind them, “you’re only making this worse for yourself!”

Tommy twitched his tail around until he was fully pressed into Wilbur’s palm. And he made a nervous whine. Why wasn’t the scary Mer further away?

“Shh!” Wilbur whispered, but he was distracted. The water shifted again. And again. Doubling back. And then his fingers parted as Wilbur whirled into a tank Tommy hadn’t seen before. Wilbur was super duper big! And his tail curled up around the two of them, tightly pressing into a corner to hide. Tommy wasn’t sure if Wilbur had known he was big, and therefore, wasn’t very good at hiding. But, as the best hider out there, Tommy kept quiet.

Teamwork.

It was only a few seconds before something large and pink shot past the opening in the tunnel. Leaving Tommy and Wilbur unseen. And from beyond, Tommy heard an angry roar *pod-come-now!* And Tommy ducked into Wilbur’s hand with a shocked chirp.

He didn’t know how angry a big Mer could get! Just the noise made Tommy want to curl up in a ball and hope for mercy.

Wilbur said a bad word under his breath. Shooting forwards at the tunnel. There was an odd thing attached to it. A round metal circle that looked to be the same size as the opening. Wilbur grabbed it, actually *dropping Tommy* in the process. Tommy scrambled to hold onto something, his fingers grabbing onto one of Wilbur’s fins and holding onto it. Wilbur pulled the metal circle over the opening, and the metal made a weird clicking noise.

There was a snarl just outside. And the shockwave of something hitting the metal circle made the water jump. Wilbur practically flew back from the... door? Hatch? Thing? And Tommy was scooped back up by his hands and held to Wilbur’s chest.

“Wilbur!” Technoblade’s voice snarled and the hatch was slammed again. “Open this *right now.*”

“I’m in my room!” Wilbur called back, his voice shaking and he clutched Tommy tighter to his chest. “I did what you want, leave me alone!”

“That isn’t how it works.” Technoblade hit the door again. “I know what you have!”

“He’s *mine!*” Wilbur’s voice went high and musically, and Tommy could only clutch at his fingers. “He’s mine! You didn’t believe me, and he’s my pup. Get away!” And Wilbur made a snarly growly voice and his fins were puffed up and high.

There was a long, painful pause. Tommy almost hoped that Wilbur had scared Technoblade away. What a great protector! But then Technoblade spoke up, cold and calculating. “Are... you nesting, Wil?”

Wilbur snarled again.

There was a mutter and a curse. Wow. Dream would have issues with the amount of bad words they were saying. Tommy was supposed to know them. “Fine. Have it your way.”

There was a splash and a swoosh of water and after a minute of silence-

Technoblade was *gone*.

Wilbur did it. He scared the big Mer away. Tommy let out a happy squeaky trill, his gills still aching. And Wilbur uncoiled his tail from around them slowly, still staring at the door. But the corner of his mouth twitched up as Tommy pushed his fingers away so he could finally swim again! This was great news! The best kind ever! Wilbur was the best caretaker ever!

Tommy darted up and around Wilbur's neck, letting his tail curl around it as he pressed himself against Wilbur's cheek. *Caretaker!* Tommy crooned happily.

Wilbur cupped Tommy close, and purred. His yellow eyes looking big and dark and half lidded. "Yeah," a couple bubbles escaped his smiling lips, "yeah I'm your caretaker."

#### Chapter End Notes

I am not posting to disregard the tragedy that happened. I know that many of you, fanfiction is a coping mechanism. It's mine too. And I have seen a few comments asking if I will continue to write. I will. All of this has been prewritten. I wanted to post to give an out to others. And I hope it'll give you a bit of escape.

I will moderate the comments on this fic, and I ask of you to please do not vent or touch on heavy subjects. I am extremely sensitive to them. And I do not want to go back into a negative place because of your messages. Please just talk about the fic.

Thank you.

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy wanted to say, that Wilbur was the *best* caretaker-protector ever. It was like when Dream visited and played with Tommy. Except Wilbur could also stay under the water as long as Tommy can, and Wilbur never left for days on end. Tommy knew that Dream was very busy all the time. And he couldn't visit often. But when he did it was a lot of fun!

Wilbur's room was also very cool. Tommy had never seen a tank like it before. There was a large cushiony area that Wilbur called his cove. It had swooshy fabric that swayed in the water that covered the area, hiding it from view, creating a dark space for sleep. And the 'bed' was amazing too. It was very soft and perfect to sleep on. Tommy liked to run his hands over the fuzzy fabrics, fascinated by the texture. He didn't know you could sleep on soft things. And Tommy could sink into it and just it'll feel like he was floating on a current, so soft and warm.

And there was a lot of odd objects in the room too! Human things! The kind that Dream said that Tommy didn't get to have because he wasn't a human. It was okay. Tommy did kind of wonder what it would be like to look at them, but Wilbur had his own human things in the tank!! Tommy's favorite was a little teapot that was painted with flowers. Tommy could slip through the spout and curl up inside, just like his treasure chest.

There were shelves lining the room full of human things. Sparkly amazing things that Tommy could stare at for hours. There was a mirror too. And Tommy scared himself when he saw another little Mer! At first he thought that it was great! Because there was somebody his size here! But it turns out when Tommy darted up to say hello that it was a 'reflection' and he crashed into the hard surface.

Wilbur was very concerned. Crooning and holding Tommy's limp body as Tommy tried to regain his senses. His ears tickled from the noise, and Wilbur made one really odd sound that made Tommy limp and pliant as he checked Tommy over for any injuries. Wilbur kept him close to his chest and made him nap, all the while brushing Tommy's back soothingly with his fingers.

Tommy purred, the sound little more than a soft hum due to his size. Wilbur didn't let him leave his cove for a while afterwards. Keeping Tommy within an arms distance. And that was okay too! Because Wilbur began to sing! Tommy loved singing too. And he trilled and chirped along with Wilbur, who laughed and looked at Tommy with a fond look.

Tommy thinks he might like Wilbur an awful lot. Especially since he liked to play with Tommy. Wilbur wasn't like Tommy's fish friends. Tommy chased after the bright and colorful fish all the time, but Wilbur played with Tommy. Wiggling his fingers as Tommy darted around them, brushing his fins against the sensitive areas and making Wilbur laugh.

Although there was one thing Tommy did *not* like. Wilbur wanted to touch Tommy's tail. A lot. Wilbur crooned and made noises, trying to calm Tommy down to let him grab it. But Tommy didn't like it! His scales were just fine. Sure, they weren't as shiny as Wilbur's were. But they were still fine! They weren't really dirty.

Tommy really really hated his tail being touched. Dream used to take a brush to his scales, and it always left Tommy feeling raw afterwards. Unable to move his fins for a long time afterwards because of how sensitive they were. And Wilbur wanted to do the same! Tommy hated being groomed.

It was just the worst!

Wilbur was trying to get Tommy to come closer. But Tommy had seen the brush with the long stick in his hands! Tommy wasn't a fool! He's the smartest Mer ever. So he was darting around, watching as Wilbur tried to grab him but always missing by an inch or two. Wilbur crooned *come-safe-pup* and Tommy answered back with an annoyed hiss. And then he coughed. He's been doing that a lot recently. But at least his gills stopped hurting!

Then Tommy froze.

His gills flared as he tried to sense where the danger was. But it was like when Wilbur first showed up to Tommy's old tank. It made a shiver run down his scales. Something dangerous was nearby. Something *wrong*.

A monster was near.

Wilbur didn't notice. Or maybe he didn't care. He floated to Tommy, still crooning, still holding the brush behind his back that he didn't know that Tommy knew about, and he didn't seem bothered by the new electric current in the water.

With a quick bark of *flee!* Tommy darted to Wilbur's shelves. Hiding amongst the human items. Wilbur would have to find a new hiding spot! Tommy could curl up behind one of the strange bowls and frames, but Wilbur was too big. His cove would be a good spot, actually, the flowing fabric around it could shelter him.

Tommy was behind a stack of what looked like flat black disks when he heard the splash of water at the top of the tank.

Wilbur's tank was odd. In more ways than one. The top of the tank was open to a big room, with a large bed and even more curious objects in there. Like a desk with a computer, and lots of human clothes lying around. Tommy had poked his head up to look around, but found his lungs hurt really badly in the open air. He had to cough the itch away as he darted back into the water.

There was a monster up there.

Tommy poked his head out to see what Wilbur was doing. And just like Tommy thought, Wilbur went to his cove, a stricken look on his face. Oh no. Wilbur wasn't super duper scared with Technoblade. But if he was scared that meant something really *bad* was happening.

“Wilbur,” the voice was echo and muffled because it was still in the air. But the sound still traveled through the water just fine. “I’m coming in, okay mate? It’s just me. Techno’s out.”

Wilbur gave out a large warning hiss. And through the flowing gaps of the fabric, Tommy could see his fins starting to puff up. “Out!” Wilbur snapped, showing off his sharp teeth. They were super scary. If Wilbur wasn’t Tommy’s caretaker-protector then Tommy would be swimming as fast as he could! “Get out! This is my room. Out!”

There was a long sigh, “I won’t do anything, I promise. Okay mate? I brought you some food. I figured you wouldn’t come out of your den while you’re brooding.”

Wilbur hissed, but a little less scarily this time. Tommy hoped that would mean the monster would leave. But instead, there was a splash and the odd noise of clothes being ripped, and a monster was here.

In Wilbur’s *tank*. With *Tommy*.

This has to be illegal.

Tommy curled up into a tight ball. Holding his tail with his arms. As the biggest Mer he had ever seen slowly sank into the tank. Tommy thought Technoblade was huge! But this Mer had the biggest tail out of all of them. At first, Tommy thought the Mer’s scales were completely black. But then the light caught a few of the scales, and it turns out it was a very dark green.

The Mer’s tail flicked out like a snake. And Tommy cowered at the sight. Although the Mer wasn’t as big and strong as Technoblade looked, the size of his tail made Tommy’s instincts scream *predator*. This Mer was *old*.

Long blonde hair pulled into a ponytail swirled around the Mer’s head, and he held a bowl in his hands. Through the currents Tommy’s nose perked up as he smelled food. It wasn’t shrimp. But it was some kind of fish. Although his nose wrinkled at the pungent smell that followed it.

Some fish smelled nasty.

“Get out Phil!” Wilbur barked out, and a death rattle began to rise up.

The new Mer, Phil, didn’t seem scared. Instead he lowered himself to the ground. His belly brushing up against the floor of the tank. A submissive pose. It made the fear ebb slightly in Tommy’s stomach. Phil wasn’t aggressive or angry. That was good.

“Shhh,” Phil shushed Wilbur’s death rattle, holding the bowl out to Wilbur. “I got you some octopus. I know how it’s your favorite, Wil.”

The death rattle ceased. And Wilbur perked up, eyeing up the bowl in Phil’s hand. “Is...” Wilbur licked his lips, “is it fresh?”

Phil purred, and the noise shook the water, making it vibrate from how loud it was. It was a far cry from the noise Wilbur made. “Of course, only the best for you. It’s been a few days

since you held up in here, and you have to be starving.”

Wilbur held Phil’s gaze before lowering his fins. He edged closer and snatched the bowl from Phil’s clawed hands before curling back in his cove. His fingers dipping into the bowl and rising up with pale flesh between his fingers. Shoving it into his mouth frantically.

Tommy’s stomach rumbled a bit. But he wasn’t starving. Dream only came by every couple of days to feed Tommy, so he was really used to not eating for long periods of time. And technically Tommy had food if he got desperate. Once Dream didn’t come back for a *super duper* long time. And Tommy had to eat the fish he swam with. Dream didn’t come back until there was only Tommy left in the tank, shaking and trembling and alone with no company. Tommy had tried *really hard* to wait until Dream came back. But his hunger won out, leaving Tommy to eat his friends.

Dream said he’d never leave Tommy alone for that long again. And he got Tommy more fish, which helped soothe that terrified part of Tommy’s that said he’d be alone for forever. It had taken a long time before Tommy could gain back a healthy amount of weight.

Still, the scent of the food in the water made Tommy’s stomach grumble quietly. He could go a long time before eating again, but watching Wilbur eat the bowl of meat made Tommy just a little bit jealous.

Well, if Wilbur was *that* hungry then Tommy won’t steal any of his food. He’s very kind and gracious about it all. His caretaker-protector needed food too. Phil kept purring quietly, and Wilbur slowly relaxed from the sound.

“Hey Wil,” Phil said, raising a hand and resting his head on his palm. Looking calm as he sat on the floor of Wilbur’s tank. “How are you? I’m checking in.”

“Okay,” Wilbur eyed Phil up and down, but didn’t raise his fins up again. “Better now. Thank you for the food.”

Phil smiled, “no problem. I heard you have some company.” A light glinted in Phil’s eyes as they wandered around the tank idly.

“Out!” Wilbur’s fins raised up, and he hissed again. “Leave!”

Phil raised up his hands, “I’m not here to take your guppy, Wilbur. I’m here to check up on you. You don’t think I care about my own son?”

“You can’t have him! He’s mine!” Wilbur’s death rattle appeared, puffing up his chest and looking very intimidating.

“Okay. I won’t go near him. I promise.” Phil floated away from Wilbur, giving him more space. “It’s okay, Wilbur. I know how hard it is to be suddenly hit with your instincts, let alone start brooding. I had to deal with you and Techno at the same time.”

The extra space helped a lot. Wilbur stopped growling, and slowly his fins fell down again. He held a hand against his head, “sorry. I don’t know why that keeps happening.”

"Instincts, mate. It happens to us all." Phil nodded sympathetically, "speaking of, may I see him?" The question was light and soft, but Tommy felt it hit him like a blow. He ducked further behind the black disk.

"No." Was Wilbur's flat response. And Phil nodded without protest.

"Okay. I just wanted to see, that's all. I also wanted to come in and let you know I found the extra fine filters. And I set them up in our den filtration." Phil cocked his head to the side.

Wilbur hissed, "no! We don't need to go to your den. This is perfectly fine."

"It's just a precaution. You know how fragile pups are." Phil crooned, "you know how rough it is on them moving from area to area. They're so fragile. You know how hard it is for guppies to survive in the wild after the oil spills. Has he been having trouble breathing?"

Wilbur hesitated. "He's been coughing a bit." A worried and distressed look appeared on his face, "is he sick?"

"We need to be very careful." Phil nodded, "the survival rate on them are low until they're old enough to grow their legs, Wil. You remember how sick Technoblade a few years ago? It can be worse for pups."

Wilbur let out a distressed warble. "No."

"Yeah." Phil said solemnly. "If he has a cough we might have to keep a really close eye on him. It could just be shock from moving places too suddenly, or he could've gotten something else. Who knows what filth he's been living in before this."

Tommy took great offense to that. But he didn't grumble, he was too smart to give away his position. As an expert hider, he knew all of the best tricks to stay hidden. He was staring at the intruding Mer he almost missed the sound of metal softly clicking. Tommy glanced around, but he didn't see what was making the noise.

"But he's *mine*." Wilbur's fins moved up again, but the motion was half hearted. Wilbur's gills flared up as he thought, a pinched expression on his face. "He's mine, Dad. You can install the filters in *my* room. You're just trying to take him away from me!"

"Oh Wilbur," Phil sighed, a trail of bubbles escaping his lips. "I know you're stressed. But you've forgotten one thing. We're a *pod*. I am your father. I am here to help you. And the sick guppy." A dark look gleamed in his eyes, his expression changing into one that was familiar to Tommy. He had seen it on his own face when he saw a shiny trinket and *wanted*. "It has been *decades* since I've seen a baby, Wilbur. Don't you know it's good to share? *We* can take care of him."

Wilbur lunged with an angry shriek. Before he had flicked his tail once, the round door slammed open, and a blur of pink threw itself at Wilbur.

"Careful." Phil didn't move, still laying on the ground and watching with cool eyes as Technoblade tackled Wilbur. "We don't know if he has the pup on him."

Wilbur screamed, and the water trembled with the noise. Tommy clutched his hands over his ears. The smell of blood started to waft in the water. A slight pink film dissipating from the bloody nose Wilbur got when Technoblade accidentally slammed his forehead into Tommy's caretaker.

"You," Technoblade grunted, trying to grapple Wilbur, "try pinning him down when hes," Wilbur's tail squirmed free from Technoblades and the fins slapped Techno in the face. Technoblade grunted, freeing up one hand and grabbing Wilbur's tail and trying to wrap his own around it. "Like this!"

Phil caught one of Wilbur's arms, his claws extended and aiming for Techno's face. "No, don't scratch your brother's face up. You've already did that once, but Techno wouldn't be so nice the second time."

Between the two of them grabbing the twisting and writhing Mer was almost painfully easy. Wilbur hissed and spat, trying to crane his neck around and sink his teeth into Phil or Technoblade. His blue scaled tail firmly twisted up with Technoblade's, and Wilbur let out a wheeze of bubbles as Techno wrapped one hand around his gills. Not fully covering them, letting Wilbur breathe. But only just.

"Shhh," Phil ran his fingers through Wilbur's brown hair. And he let out a comforting croon. "It's okay, Wil. I know it's hard. But you need a reminder that we are your pod. Just relax. It'll be okay."

Techno leaned over Wilbur's body like a vulture. "You seriously couldn't distract him long enough for the drugs to work, Phil?" His long pink hair fell into his face from where it had fallen out of the soft braid during the struggle.

Phil didn't look sorry at all. He shrugged, his fingers trailing down Wilbur's scales until they hit one of his side fins. Wilbur jerked as Phil pulled one open, checking it, and then letting it close. "Not here," Phil hummed, and then checked Wilbur's other fins, "where can you be hiding your baby Wilbur?"

Wilbur growled, but the noise was weak and not very threatening when one of his arms was pinned back and Techno's hand wrapped around his throat. Tommy shivered, the water suddenly cold. He liked to hide under Wilbur's fins. Phil was *looking for him*.

"No wonder you were on edge, mate." Phil dropped Wilbur's final fin. "Your pup isn't with you."

"Thank Prime," Techno muttered, "I was afraid of squishing them in the struggle."

"I told you to be gentle."

"You should've been better at distracting him, Phil." Techno shot back, "he wouldn't put up such a fuss if you had let the octopus work. Then I wouldn't have been so rough taking him down."

Wilbur slurred out a curse word. His head pressed up against the soft fabrics of his cove. Tommy swallowed a nervous chitter, were the big Mer going to eat Tommy's caretaker-protector? That wasn't fair. Tommy just found him. And they were going to eat him!

"I wasn't too worried, mate." Phil patted Techno on the side, "if Wilbur had him he would've probably broken a fin trying to keep the pup safe."

Wilbur was slowly tilting downwards. Sagging and falling limp in Techno's grip. He tried to hiss, but all that came out was a small trail of bubbles. His yellow eyes expanding and contracting, lazily blinking as he twitched. Phil and Technoblade waited. Watching as Wilbur slowly softened and became a puddle.

Phil hummed, pulling his fingers through Wilbur's hair again and gently picking apart the knots and tangles he found. "There you go, sweetheart." Phil crooned, and Wilbur hummed softly back. "That's it. You don't have to worry about anything, we have you now. I promise, I'll take care of everything for you."

Wilbur made a soft *caretaker*? Mimicking the noise that Tommy called him. And Phil leaned forwards and tapped his forehead against Wilbur's.

"You know I am," Phil cooed, "I've always been your dad."

Technoblade finally released Wilbur. And the blue scaled Mer fell face first into the fabrics. Unmoving. "Do you need some help with the pup?" Technoblades red eyes flashed across the room, scanning the area. Tommy froze. And thankfully he didn't see Tommy.

"No. Why don't you take Wilbur to the den?" Phil grinned, his teeth sharp and glinting in the light. "I can find *Tommy* all by myself."

## Chapter End Notes

I didnt even scan it as i posted so if there are any mistakes, I dont care lol.

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Notes

read the tags again. A lot of warnings apply to this chapter. For the sake of spoilers, I won't share which ones. Consider almost all of them prevalent in this chapter.

THIS IS A DARK SBI FIC. I hate I have to say that all the time. Why can't ya'll look at the tags? I'm exhausted by trying to warn you of the content you read. Anyways- dark sbi fic, dark stuff, yada yada yada. Be warned.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

How- how did Phil know his name? Tommy nearly squeaked in utter shock. But he was amazing and cool that he didn't make a sound. Technoblade hefted Wilbur up in his arms, and Wilbur let off a soft croon of *protector-safe-pod* as he lazily twirled his fingers through Techno's long pink hair. He leaned forwards and awkwardly knocked his forehead to the big Mer's chin.

"How much did you give him?"

"All of it." Phil shrugged, nonplussed.

Technoblade grumbled, "all of my stash?"

"Techno, you know more than anybody I wouldn't have let you have that octopus if I knew you bought some." Phil gave Technoblade a level look, "I do not appreciate you sneaking behind my back."

Technoblade's tail twitched, "it's for the voices. They told me to get it." He looked remarkably like Tommy did when Dream caught him using human things. Except big. And scary. And mean looking. And not like Tommy, who is a good little Mer, at all. Wilbur softly warbled something Tommy hadn't heard before.

"That's what you said when you tried to eat a pufferfish and it got stuck in your mouth and it took me three hours to pull all of the quills out of your skin." Phil said dryly. Techno looked abashed. "Now go. And close the door behind you. I don't want any runaways."

Technoblade grumbled. But with a beat of his strong tail, he sailed out of Wilbur's tank and into a tunnel. Wilbur humming a tuneless song in his arms. The door was closed behind him.

Sealing Tommy in. With the deadly huge Mer.

Phil didn't move for a couple of seconds. He took in the room, his eyes jumping around. And finally he made a comforting croon again, *safe-come-here*. Tommy was tired of hearing that

noise. The big Mer's always sang it.

It wasn't as comforting as Wilbur's croon. Tommy shivered at the thought of the big Mer grabbing him. Chasing him down like a tasty snack.

"Tommy," Phil sang slowly, "come here guppy. Are you hungry? I have some food for you." His big dark tail fin slowly opened up, and Tommy's eyes caught on it. It would be a perfect spot to hide under-

No! Nuh-uh! Tommy wasn't going to fall for that trick! Although Wilbur had been very nice giving Tommy a whole shrimp, but Tommy wasn't going to listen to Phil. Not when he was so big and scary. Wilbur's tank had felt so incredibly small with all three of the large Mer in it. There was more scales and tails than water. But now that Wilbur had left Tommy the room felt too wide. Too big. The open space was suddenly very frightening.

Tommy wanted to curl up in Wilbur's palm and pretend everything was okay. He didn't want to think about what was happening. And that a giant Mer with a long tail, that curled and curled around the room until there was black-green scales everywhere, wasn't hunting him down. Tommy wanted his protector. His caretaker. He didn't want to be scared.

Why did Wilbur leave? Why did he let the big mean pink Mer take him? Why? Tommy didn't know. He just wanted his caretaker again. Not some big scary ocean Mer.

Phil did not get the unspoken message. He ducked into Wilbur's nest, the flowy fabric drifting with the motion. Picking up a soft round pillow and peering underneath it. "Tommy, that is your name, right pup? I'm so sorry I didn't get to meet you sooner. I had some unfinished business come up. But it's okay now. I'm here." He crooned again, and Tommy peeked out from behind the disk.

And then Phil struck his hand flashing out like lightning. Pulling up a blanket and then dropping it with a sigh of disappointed bubbles. "I won't hurt you, mate. I'm just a little concerned, that's all. You're hungry right? I have all of the food you can ever dream of."

Tommy dipped behind the black disk. Curling up in a smaller ball. His tail twitching anxiously. A real predator. A real danger. A big *monster*. Looking for him. Tommy wanted to cry out to Wilbur but the big Mer had done something to his caretaker-protector. He had stolen Wilbur away. Maybe to *eat* him. And now it was just Tommy.

He shook and trembled and hoped that he wouldn't be found.

There was a low hum. "I guess this isn't working very well, huh? You haven't been around other Mer before, have you? I know this is hard and scary for you, pup. You've been all alone for so long." There was a shuffle of movement. From the reflection in the grooved black disk, Tommy could see Phil pulling up another pillow. "You know how difficult it is to have children these days? Guppies are so fragile. At first, it's because we would have dozens at a time. And only one or two would survive until adult hood. But those were simpler times."

Tommy didn't know what Phil was talking about. He didn't make any sense. Instead he played very good as a rock. Not moving. And hidden. No Mer here. Just a nice rock.

“When humans started to put things in the water, we didn’t know how it affected the little ones. Not until what we saw became of the schools of pups. The survival rate is so low, so tiny, that perhaps one in a hundred would live long enough to gain an immunity system. But even those odds dwindled. You’re so special, Tommy. Because I don’t think our kind has been able to have a baby for the past twenty years. Humans destroyed our reefs. Polluted our breeding grounds. And they’re trying to set up rules and regulations against us. Trying to make us conform to their demands and dangling the *possibility* of having children again.”

Phil’s voice was getting further away from Tommy. And he relaxed. Just a little bit. Knowing that the monster was getting leaving him be. There was a sound of bubbles as the big Mer exhaled, “but you know what’s funny, Tommy?”

Water rocked up against Tommy’s tail, as something moved in the water. Tommy couldn’t help himself. He peered up and through the small crack between the shelf and the disk. Phil was looping lazily in a circle. His big black tail spinning and spinning around. Creating a tidepool. Black scales that seem to go on forever and ever.

“Humans don’t know that a special few of us can grow *legs*. And I find a special type of joy ruining as many lives as I can. Just because of what they’ve done to us. Because they have taken precious little Mer like you away. You’re so special, Tommy.” Phil purred, his blue eyes were slits and his eyelids lowered, scanning across the room. “I’ll treasure you like gold. Treat you like a jewel. I’ll give you everything you want, little guppy. All you have to do is be *mine*.”

Tommy cowered. He didn’t believe Phil. Ocean Mer were evil. They ate people and destroyed humans. And Phil just confessed to Tommy how evil he really is! Tommy isn’t like him at all. He’s a good little Mer, and he likes his tank and Dream and everybody else.

Phil looped a few more times before blowing out a long stream of bubbles. “Fine.” He sighed, closing his eyes mournfully, “I tried the easy way. I didn’t want to do this, but you leave me no choice.”

Tommy had barely enough time to wonder what Phil was going to do when his heart seized in his chest. Tommy had heard a lot of scary things before. But he had never heard *this*. Phil’s fins slowly rose up. He had a pair framing his face, and they extended up until they were like wings. And it started as a slow bubbling hiss before Phil *snarled*. Exposing his sharp bone white teeth and-

The scariest death rattled shook the water. It wasn’t a simple click. But the final tick of a bomb about to go off. Tommy had heard a lot of terrifying things before. But this hit a primal part of him. Like a hammer hitting a nerve. Lighting up like fire and burning with a gut wrenching intensity that Tommy had no control over. Sending him into a scared frenzy.

Before Tommy knew what was happening, he was moving. His tail was working as hard as it could. Throwing himself out of his hiding spot and ducking and letting loose a stream of scared *help-protector-help* whimpers and shrieks as Tommy fled. He needed safe. He was too exposed.

He ducked and darted wildly around and-

There was safety. Just in front of him. Tommy squirmed his way into the teapot through the spout. His tail frantically pushing him forwards. His gills flared as he frantically breathed, in and out, his lungs aching and burning. He curls up into a ball in the safe dark space. He let out a dry cough, trying to hold it in but failing.

He wheezed and gasped and coughed. Letting out terrified chirps, cowering in the smooth round bowl. Trying to hide in a corner but there were no corners to hide in. It was all smooth in the sloping porcelain.

The teapot *moved*. The water shifting and Tommy tumbled to the side unexpectedly. And he heard a delighted and pleased purr. It was so much closer than it was before. And it made Tommy's body vibrate with the sound.

"Hey there little one." Phil's voice was so much closer. Just outside of the teapot. And Tommy fearfully keened. "Shhh, it's okay. I'm so sorry for scaring you. You're so much smaller than I thought you were. You can't be more than a year old."

Tommy's instincts warred with each other. Half of him told him to continue to flee. To swim and swim until he couldn't flick his tail any further. But the other half whispered the dark was safe. The monster couldn't touch Tommy here. And Tommy needed to keep still and quiet and the Mer would eventually leave.

After a few moments, Tommy's flighty instinct finally won out. He darted up the spout, ready to flee and hide once more since Phil knew where he was it wasn't safe, but Tommy hit something covering the exit. It was warm and scaly. Phil was blocking Tommy's escape. And Tommy recoiled from the warm touch, pulling himself out of the tight space and back into the main chamber of the pot.

There was no escape.

Tommy was caught. Again. The moment reminded him of how Wilbur took him away from his old tank in the chest.

Water swished and the teapot jolted again. Tommy let out a surprised peep, and there was soft laughter. "It's okay. We're going to the den."

Tommy didn't like the sound of that. Not at all. Phil purred, the sound almost soothing if he wasn't a threat to Tommy. Instead the little Mer darted up to the top of the pot and tried to push at the lid. But it was too heavy for something as small as him to lift. He let out a frustrated and scared trill.

"It's okay. I know, it's scary. But you'll be just fine." Phil reassured him. And Tommy finally sank to the bottom of the pot and he hugged his tail nervously. His gills stuttering and he gave out small coughs. Hoping that the big Mer couldn't hear him.

Maybe Phil might think Tommy's dead if he's quiet enough?

That was something to hope for. If he could stop coughing then it would work. Surely.

There was the sound of clicking metal, and the pot shifted around, sending Tommy careening back and forth until it was stabilized. Tommy knew that sound. It was the metal door opening and closing.

“You found him?” Technoblade’s voice came out of nowhere and Tommy flinched from the sound.

Phil said fondly, “yeah. He’s a stubborn one. I ended up having to scare him out of his hiding spot. He was behind Wilbur’s records.”

Technoblade grunted, “well? Let me see.”

“Sorry mate, but the water is a bit warmer in here. We will need to wait for him to acclimate to the new temperature. And this time, he won’t jump out of his bowl ahead of time.” Phil said in a teasing tone, “I’ll keep my thumb over the spout.”

“What did he look like?” Technoblade got closer. And he was just right outside of the pot.

“White pearly scales, with a hint of gold underneath.” Phil sighed happily, “he’s stunning. And so much smaller than I thought he was. He’s so small, Techno. Kristin will lose her marbles when she sees him.”

“Mom hasn’t seen a guppy since us, right?”

Phil hummed his agreement, and the low purr rose up again. “Your school had about a dozen eggs hatch. You should’ve seen it, each of you your own different colors. Flashing in and around the corals and chasing each other. Kristin was so happy that we beat the odds and two of you survived.”

“Where is she right now?”

“She’s taking care of a few things down in the depths. Otherwise she’d be here. I wish she could grow legs. She would love to be here.” Phil didn’t stop making that purring noise.

Nothing was happening. Just the two big evil Mers talking. They weren’t opening the tea pot and pulling him out to eat him. Tommy let out a nervous churr. And the purring noise outside grew louder. It surrounded him. Wrapping him up in gentle vibrations.

Tommy couldn’t stop from slowly relaxing. His heart calming down. His tail fins slowly released. The words were starting to slur together as he slowly blinked in the darkness. All he could hear was a low constant humming noise that slowly worked it’s magic. Leaving Tommy sleepy and exhausted. “How were things in your meeting?”

“Hm,” Techno grunted, “Las Nevadas is slowly encroaching on our territory. I’ll take care of them.”

“Try and aim for an eye.” Phil suggested, and Tommy blinked a few more times. The water was getting warmer. And Tommy hadn’t realized how cold he was until he let out a sigh of bubbles and relaxed on the bottom of the pot. His adrenaline was gone. Leaving him sore and tired, his bones achy and his gills sore.

“I’ll use a pickaxe.” Techno huffed with amusement.

“Good.” Phil happily purred, and the noise grew louder. Tommy couldn’t tell when he stopped opening his eyes. It was so dark. But eventually he slipped off into a light doze.

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Fingers curled around Tommy’s torso. The touch woke up him, and he twitched his tail as he was gently pulled out of the dark pot. It took him a few seconds for reality to hit him. Laying limp as a fish, his tail dragging down as he was pulled from the pot. The world around him was bright and full of color that blinded him.

He let out a protesting sleepy whine, his hands coming up and holding the fingers around his torso. Two comforting rumbles rose up, and Tommy was so confused- Wilbur could do that?

He blinked, the world coming into sharp focus. And he saw pink. Pink scales that looked like they stretched out for miles. Tommy sharply sucked in a breath of water, his gills flaring in surprise and in horror as he realized that *Wilbur wasn’t the one holding him*. Black scaled fingers held him firmly but gently. Pinning him down.

Tommy chirped in fear and then devolved into a coughing fit. His escape attempt was foiled as all of his attention went from that to trying to suck in another lung full of water. His gills weren’t working. Leaving Tommy gaping and gasping.

Although it hurt, the sensation of choking faded away quickly. Far faster than the other coughs Tommy had before. There was a deep worried croon, and he felt a finger trail down his spine. “It’s okay, Tommy.” Phil said, and Tommy peered over his shoulder to see Phil far too close with those sharp teeth. Tommy stiffened, freezing in fear. “Take in deep breaths. In and out, okay mate?”

Tommy did not. In fact, he was trying very hard not to breathe at all. And Phil coaxingly dragged the finger up and down his back until Tommy was breathing to the rhythm. His gills hurt. Feeling hot and burning. But the water was somehow easier to breathe here. Lighter and fresh.

“There you go, mate.” Phil smiled, thankfully keeping his sharp teeth covered with his lips. Tommy might die of a heart attack if he saw those so close to his head. “That’s it. You’re doing so good.”

Tommy flicked his tail and tried to squirm out of the grip again. His hands coming up and trying to push Phil’s fingers off of him. But it was pointless. He wasn’t strong enough to get free. And he wheezed when he tried to whimper instead.

“It’s okay, I have you now.” Phil crooned, “look at you. You’re so skinny. And your poor scales.” The finger trailed down and traced Tommy’s tail. Phil grabbed the fins gently and turned and twisted it until he looked at the dim scales. They weren’t as shiny as the other Mer’s and Tommy let out a frightened keen that ended in a hoarse cough.

“Shhh,” Technoblade was there. Tommy had almost forgotten he was surrounded. Tommy quickly glanced around and saw Wilbur was there. His head on Techno’s lap. His blue tail

wrapped up by pink scales. His caretaker-protector was slowly blinking, gills fluttering in the water as Techno's hand was woven through his brown curls.

He hadn't been eaten! But he had to save Tommy. Right now!!

Tommy struggled and writhed in Phil's grip. He freed one arm, and held it out to Wilbur. He wiggle and cried, and Wilbur's big black eyes blinked at him and crooned *guppy-mine-calm-safe-pod*. The hand in his hair reached up and rubbed at Wilbur's ear fins in praise.

"It's safe, see?" One of the big Mer's said, but Tommy barely noticed.

No!! That wasn't acceptable! Tommy's neck burned, his gills working hard as he started to hyperventilate. Panic blinded him. And Tommy threw his head back and screamed, *PROTECTOR!-NEED-PROTECTOR-HURTS-DANGER-HELP-SCARED-HELP*.

The water went from a peaceful calm to a churning tsunami. Water and bubbles flew up and around as Wilbur grabbed Technoblade and raked his claws down his arm, hissing and spitting. His dark eyes turning into furious slits.

Tommy could only catch a glimpse as Technoblade whipped around and *roared* before he was pulled away. A dark black-green fin covered him. A screech echoed in the water. And he cried and wailed, coughing over and over as he called for Wilbur.

"Shh," Phil hummed, nonplussed by the sudden fight. His vibrant blue eyes slits as they looked down at Tommy under his fin. A thumb raised up and swiped over Tommy's tail. "Trouble maker," he lightly teased.

The action felt nice. But Tommy squirmed and whined, deeply frowning and trying to dig his fingers under the scales. He didn't want to be here. There was another growl and screech, and then the tank was quiet again. The water rocking back and forth until it stopped.

"Stop," Technoblade growled, the water humming from the noise. Tommy threw back his head and let out a long high pitched keen. Barely taking in another breath before doing it again. Wilbur was dead. He was eaten. He's gone now. He left Tommy again. He couldn't see Wilbur and he wasn't here anymore.

"Silly pup," Phil blew bubbles over Tommy, "he's just fine, see?" The dark fin fell down, and Tommy craned his neck to see.

Wilbur was alive! Technoblade was holding him down, a big hand over Wilbur's fluttering gills on his neck. Wilbur's hands were clasped around Techno's wrists, and he was making little whistling noises. Techno's big sharp teeth were bared in a snarl, staring Wilbur down with intense focus.

Tommy instantly reached a hand out and cried *protector-help*.

And then! The most horrible thing happened! Instead of Wilbur replying, Technoblade clenched his hand, muffling Wilbur's gasps and weak whistles, Techno darkly hummed

*protector-here-safe-pup.* Wilbur's hands slid limp, his eyes hazy, staring at nothing, and Techno eased the hold he had. A sharp smug grin on the pink Mer's lips.

No! That is *very illegal*.

Techno was *not* Tommy's protector. That was- it was- *no!!* So wrong! The injustice! Tommy did not like him at all.

Tommy surprised himself when his own lips curled back and he let out a challenging bark. His own fins rising up and making him look even bigger. If Wilbur can't win then Tommy will. He will fight back this mean evil Mer and then Wilbur will be safe!

"Seriously?" Technoblade's voice rose in incredulous shock. His pink hair falling into his face, "what is wrong with this guppy Phil?"

"Awww, look at him." Phil blew another stream of bubbles that tickled Tommy's scales. Tommy turned and snapped his teeth at him. He's a big and mean these Mer should watch out! Tommy will eat *them!* Ha! Take that! "He's trying so hard. This is actually pretty common to pups whose schools have died off, leaving only one to survive. They tend to try and take every role they know. Right now, he wants to be Wilbur's protector."

"Bruh," Techno gave Tommy a flat look, "don't give me that attitude."

"Shush Tech," Phil's thumb rose up and rubbed Tommy's back. Oh. That was really nice. "He'll settle once he gets some attention. Guppies fold like wet paper."

Tommy straightened up from slumping into Phil's touch. He hissed angrily, and reached down and bit Phil's fingers. The scales were tough. But he will bite through it! He can bite anything.

"I don't appreciate him setting Wilbur on me." Techno growled, "why don't you take care of your own son and I'll hold the guppy next time."

"Wilbur is brooding. Heaven knows how many times Kristin pinned me down over your school. I kept getting it into my head I could take care of fourteen guppies on my own, and she'd toss me down and sit on me. I was lucky she didn't chase me off entirely." Phil hummed, "he'll calm down."

Technoblade growled and Wilbur let out a small pathetic whistle. Tommy growled, and then let out a cough. Letting go the barely dented scale from his teeth, and wheezing.

"Need to get that cough looked at," Phil hummed, his eyes narrowing as he stared at Tommy with a cold glance.

"Is it-?"

"No. We caught it before it got too bad. He will need to stay in here with the fine filters on for quite some time before we can let him wander."

Tommy was quite done with these evil big meanies. He squirmed and thrashed, grunting, growling, and occasionally letting out a pleading whine. *Protector-help-need-help*. He held his hands out to Wilbur who's gills flared before they were trapped under Techno's fingers. Wilbur choked, but Techno didn't seem bothered by it.

*Protector-here-I'm-here*, Technoblade hummed, his sharp red eyes on Tommy. After a few more seconds, he eased up on Wilbur's throat.

Tommy's face twisted up in fury and he barked and hissed weakly. *No!* He wasn't Tommy's protector. Wilbur was! Tommy doubled down and began to gnaw on Phil's fingers again. He was tired of being stuck!

"What were you saying about folding like paper?" Technoblade said dryly. "He is trying to bite through your fingers."

"That's because I haven't given him proper attention yet, Techno," Phil sniffed haughty. His scales shifted, his endless tail moving through the water like an eel. He leaned to the side, picking up something Tommy hadn't noticed.

The brush. The evil brush! The long stick with the bristles on the end. Tommy sank his claws into the edges of the scale and tried to tear at the skin. Hoping he could get *away*.

"Bruh is that my toothbrush?" Techno asked, the noise going over Tommy's head.

"No, not every red toothbrush is yours, Techno." Phil shifted his grip on Tommy slightly. And Tommy took his chance. Squirming and trying to squeeze his way out. "Nuh uh uh, not this time, kiddo. I just wanted to check something." His fingers pulled open Tommy's fin, and Tommy let out a scared warble.

"I know, I know. It's scary. It won't be in a second, pup." Phil blew another gentle stream of bubbles over Tommy, and it felt nice but his fins were fragile. He didn't want them hurt. If Phil wanted to, he could tear his fin. Leaving him unable to swim. "I think I can see something on his scales. It might be just be a bit of dirt but I can't tell." The tip of a finger nudged his fin to stay open. "It could be something else."

The brush got closer.

Tommy hated getting brushed. He was having the worst day ever. And more than likely it will end with him being *eaten*. But the brush was clearly the worst part. Tommy ignored how his throat choked up, he tilted his head back and yowled.

The sound petered out as Tommy croaked. Phil laughed, holding the brush in his other hand, "you act like you're about to die, sweetheart." Phil looked positively gleeful, watching Tommy with such a tender fond look that it scared Tommy. "I forgot how dramatic guppies are. Come here."

"I mean, Wilbur never grew out of it." Techno grumbled.

"Shush," Phil admonished quietly.

Tommy squirmed and pushed his hand out and let out a sad cry. A small puff of bubbles escaping his lips. He wanted Wilbur. He wanted his protector! He didn't like this. He whined and cried. But the brush was relentless. And it tickled Tommy's tail as it grazed his scales. He flinched back, expecting the pain and harsh bristles ready to scrape and make his fins raw but-

It was soft. Like the fabrics in Wilbur's cove. It was barely touching Tommy's scales. The bristles weren't firm and hard like the coral, but rather springy and tender. It wasn't scratchy in the slightest. Tommy paused from his whining protest to look down inquisitively at the brush. It didn't hurt at all.

It actually kind of felt nice.

"There you go, not too scary now is it?" Phil hummed, lifting the brush up and down as he gently rubbed off the grime that had slowly accumulated on Tommy's scales. And oh, that-*oh*.

That was-

A buzzing began to rise in the back of Tommy's brain. And he froze as it grew louder. His heart thumping in his chest fell away. His scales were gently cleaned. And it was very very *very* good.

Tommy slowly fell limp in Phil's hand with a raspy whistle.

"-told you so," a voice that was not-caretaker-protector said. Tommy was far too preoccupied by the brush than whoever was talking. Didn't they also know how nice this was?

His scales were scratched but not in the painful way. The good kind that made Tommy lean into the feeling. Pressing his face against the palm of the Mer. The water around Tommy got a bit dirty as old dried scales and the lingering bits of sand that had stayed with Tommy was scraped away.

Tommy didn't know exactly when he started the soft, yet stuttering, purr. It rumbled up deep within his chest. He couldn't focus on the words being spoken above him. The soft coos and hums of the Mers. His whole attention caught up by the best thing that had ever happened to him. Tommy wanted more. He kept his fins extended so the brush could get under those, getting the small spots that always itched where Tommy couldn't scratch. He blinked, staring up at-

Golden hair framing a sharp face, blue eyes that were narrowed slits, a wide grin on his face. Oh. Big Mer was smiling. Good. Tommy liked smiling too. Tommy didn't have big teeth though, and a shot of anxiety went through him as he saw them. Big teeth were very bad.

He had a protector. He knew that. Tommy had the bestest protector ever. Tommy called out to him, closed his eyes and cupping his face to protect himself from the big teeth.

*Protector-here-I'm-here* said-

Who?

*Where-help?* Tommy cried out, his throat raw and it hurt. But he needed... yes. He needed.

*Here-right-here* came from Protector. And Tommy whined. Protector sounded so close but Tommy was scared. He could be *eaten*.

“-hold him,” and the hand that held Tommy down let him go suddenly. Tommy blindly reached out. Crying for safety. He didn’t want to see the big teeth again. They were so scary.

He was grabbed again. Gently cupped between soft scales and warmth. The water trembled as Protector hummed, *here-safe-I’m-here*.

This was Tommy’s Protector. Tommy curled up, clinging to the scales. His hands finding large fingers, and he clung to them in a tight hug and whined again.

*Safe-here?-Scared.*

“He’s adorable,” someone whispered as Protector hummed and answered Tommy.

*Safe-here-pup-home.*

Tommy curled up tightly in Protector’s palm. Every few seconds asking if it was safe. And every time, Protector answered him. They were safe. But Tommy was scared. Hadn’t Protector seen those big teeth? But as the minutes went on, Tommy realized he was, in fact, *not* getting eaten, he let out a happy croaking chirp.

Protector had been right. Tommy was safe. And he felt Protector laugh, the water shaking from the action. “To think twenty minutes ago he was ready to fight me,” Protector fondly spoke. “Little spitfire.”

“Guppies aren’t supposed to be alone,” the other voice said, “they latch onto any Mer that help them.”

“He won’t be alone again,” Protector said. And Tommy liked that. He didn’t like being alone. He opened his eyes. The world blurry and out of focus. But he saw pink and Protector watching him. That was very good. Protector was doing his job by giving Tommy attention. That was very important.

“Hello,” Protector said, and Tommy uncurled his tail and lazily detached himself from the pink scaled fingers. He rose up and crossed the small distance until he could curl up against Protector’s neck. His tail wrapping around as far as it could go. Nestling his face in the crook of his throat, Tommy closed his eyes.

Protector let out a proud pleased purr that vibrated Tommy’s chest. And Tommy let out a raspy happy whistle. He has melted. He is a pile of goo. And Tommy couldn’t move any more.

Not until his nose twitched as he smelled food. And suddenly Tommy *could* move. His eyes blinked open, as he saw Not-Protector pull apart a small piece of dark red raw meat. Tommy

hadn't tried that kind of food before. But there was a hint of blood in the water. And his mouth was watering.

"That woke you up, huh?" The black-green Mer looked like he hadn't stopped smiling the entire time, his eyes bright and happy. His teeth were hidden behind his lips, thank goodness. "You to eat need a lot more food than just shrimp."

Tommy's arms and tail felt too heavy. But he tried to shift to grab the food, but instead, Not-Protector lowered it down to Tommy. "Here, I bet you're starving." The red flesh was offered, and Tommy snatched it from the black scaled fingertips. Sinking his teeth into it and-

If Tommy wasn't already limp against Protector's throat, then this would have made him melt entirely. It was salty, but *oh* so sweet. And the flavor simply exploded in his mouth. Tommy ripped and tore at it until he swallowed the last mouthful. The blood lingering in the water made him want more. He let out a sad croaking chirp that he finished it too quickly, before the Mer was offering him yet another little slice.

Tommy gorged on the flesh until he couldn't swallow another mouthful. The small purr rose up. And he couldn't see why he was scared of these two Mer when they were also very nice. Tommy peered up at Not-Protector and hoarsely warbled *caretaker?*

The black-green Mer's eyes did that funny thing where they expanded, and he replied, *yes-pup-mine.*

Tommy's eyes fluttered closed once more. He was full and so incredibly sleepy. And he wasn't going to get eaten. All things considered, this was amazing.

"What animal did you feed him?" Protector-no, Technoblade spoke up, his voice fuzzing at the edge of sleep. Tommy barely listened. "I didn't think we had beef left. I thought we were out."

"Oh we are," Phil grinned, showing his white deadly fangs, "I brought home something special. It was from a certain little *rat*."

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fin

## Chapter End Notes

Thats it folks.

Ill add in some other ideas but I never actually managed to put into the fic:

Kristin does meet Tommy. She can't walk on land like her hubby, but Phil does have money (and stolen resources) to bring her onto land. She waits a week to make sure

anything from the ocean won't get Tommy sick, and then watches hungrily as Phil brings in a lil guppy. Tommy is, of course, terrified, she is the biggest Mer ever. But Kristin woos him over with her motherly ways, and she tucks him under her fin and says, "thanks he's mine now, see u in a few years." JK. Tommy can't go into the ocean until he has an immunity system, and therefore, won't die of pollution. But basically when Kristin does eventually have to go back to the ocean, she makes sure to tell every Mer out there she has a guppy and the whole population is celebrating over a baby Mer that is thriving.

Phil, Techno, and Wilbur are of course, Mafia. Merfia, as you will. And their goal is to ruin as many human lives as long as politicians try to control their species. I don't know if I was able to get that across well enough. But that is what it is. (they are succeeding very very well.) And yes, Mer do eat people. They are considered a delicacy. RIP Dream.

The end of the fic. No, there will NOT BE ANY SEQUELS. This is the end. Do not ask for more. If you want more, make it yourself.

Thanks to my friends for helping me with this. And for throwing out all of their cool mer au's that I threw my hands up and said "might as well make my own." I wouldn't have done this without them. And I appreciate all of their efforts and help. Thanks to Silverwing15, BitsinBoots, HoneyDew\_Tea, Houxe, and Hydrangea\_Moobloom.

## End Notes

.....yet another baby fic.

im ruined.

My friend, Bitsinboots, author of Secret of Being Colorful and I have made a discord (MULTIFANDOM NOW as of April 2024) server together. It is a 15+ age server. And it's a dictatorship. But if you'd like to come hang out with us, feel free. Here is the [discord link](#).

If you want me to update faster I want validation, please. I need that sweet, sweet serotonin.

Works inspired by this one

[I want you back \(I won't let you go back\)](#) by [IAmTheShpee](#)

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